

Prison inmates learn skills to gain employment

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For 16 inmates at the Sacramento state prison, life may be easier after parole with the new construction skills they learned while incarcerated.

The inmates graduated Wednesday from the newly established pre-apprenticeship program. The program, which is the first of its kind in the nation, teaches inmates construction skills they can use to successfully obtain employment upon parole.

The California Department of Corrections, the **Prison Industry Authority**, the Northern California Carpenters Regional Council and Rehabilitation Secretary James Tilton proceeded over the graduation.

"This innovative training program is part of Governor Schwarzenegger's efforts to rehabilitate inmates in California's adult correctional institutions and is an important component in our renewed focus to assist inmates with the re-entry process," said Tilton, rehabilitation secretary. "This is truly an investment in public safety, because employed parolees mean safer communities."

As part of the new training, called Career Technical Education-Carpentry, inmates are refurbishing and converting the previously vacant Green Valley Fire Camp 12 at Folsom State Prison into a training and engineering center.

At the center, inmates will gain skills in concrete pouring, framing, drywall, taping and texturing, painting, roofing and finished carpentry.

After completion of the construction training, paroling inmates will be eligible for placement in a full-scale apprenticeship program, offered through the Carpenters Training Committee for Northern California, which leads to jobs with construction companies that employ organized labor.

Some of the graduating inmates will transfer to the **Prison Industry Authority's** building project. The authority is a state organization that provides productive job assignments for inmates in California's adult correctional institutions.

The authority's building project is at Folsom State Prison, where portable structures will be manufactured and sold to state agencies. The authority will pay the initial union dues and provide tools to inmates who complete the program.

"The **Prison Industry Authority** and the Northern California Carpenters Regional Council have developed this partnership to provide a new type of job training," said Charles Pattillo, the authority's acting general manager. "Inmates can learn various carpentry skill sets that are easily transferable to jobs on the outside. I am enthused about this program because by preparing inmates prior to their release, we can address the issues of unemployment among parolees."

The authority's products and services are available to governmental entities, including federal, state and local agencies. The authority also operates factories that produce a variety of goods and services including: Modular buildings, office furniture, eye glasses, license plates, coffee, shoes, printing services, signs, binders, clothing and more.

The authority established the Inmate Employability Program, which provides training, certification and job placement assistance, to improve the employability of inmates upon parole. While its work assignments help train inmates to prepare for employment, the program also reduces idleness and decreases violence in the institutions.

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